

Remarks

In the outstanding Official Action, the Examiner:

(1) objected to claim 38 because of an informality;

(2) rejected claims 14, 15 and 22 under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention;

(3) rejected claims 45-47, 56, 59 and 60 under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Lemmen (U.S. Patent No. 5,327,902) ("Lemmen");

(4) rejected claims 3-15, 18-21, 23, 31, 35-38, 40-42, 45-47 and 59-62 under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Steuer et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,711,248) ("Steuer") in view of Manoli (U.S. Patent No. 4,583,549) ("Manoli");

(5) rejected claims 3, 6-9, 12, 20-23, 26, 31, 35-38, 40, 45-47, 56 and 59-62 under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rosier (U.S. Patent No. 4,807,643) ("Rosier") in view of Manoli;

(6) rejected claims 25, 27, 28, 55, 57 and 58 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rosier as modified by Manoli and further in view of "Applicants' admission of prior art";

(7) rejected claims 57 and 58 under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lemmen in view of "Applicants' admission of prior art";

(8) allowed claims 48-54; and

(9) objected to claims 24, 29, 30 and 32-34 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but indicated that these

claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form, including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Turning first to Item 8, Applicants thank the Examiner for his indication that claims 48-54 are allowed.

In response to Items 1 through 7 above, Applicants have canceled claims 3-15, 18-23, 37-38, 40-42, 45-47 and 55-62 without prejudice, in order to expedite issuance of the subject matter deemed allowable by the Examiner. Applicants expressly reserve the right to prosecute all canceled subject matter in related applications.

Furthermore, with respect to Items 6 and 7, in view of the cancellation of selected claims, the rejections in these items are now rendered moot. Therefore, there is no need for Applicants to address the Examiner's characterization of "Applicants' admission of prior art". Applicants reserve the right to dispute this characterization if and when the Examiner should repeat this characterization in the future.

In response to Item 9 above, Applicants have amended claim 24 to rewrite this claim in independent form, including all of the limitations of the previous claim 23. Applicants have also amended claims 25-28, 31 and 35-36 so that they now depend from claim 24. Thus, Applicants believe that claim 24, and claims 25-36 which depend from claim 24 (either directly or indirectly), are now in condition for allowance.

In addition, Applicants have added new apparatus claims 63 and 69, which correspond to method claims 24 and 48, respectively. Applicants have also added dependent claims 64-68

and 70-75, which correspond to dependent claims 29-30, 32-34 and 49-54. These claims are believed to be allowable for the same reasons that claims 24, 29-30, 32-34 and 48-54 are allowable.

Accordingly, this patent application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and allowance thereof is respectfully requested.

In the event that any fees may be required in this matter, please charge the same, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 16-0221.

Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

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